



Sustainable Fuel Cycle

TASK FORCE

www.sustainablefuelcycle.com

Sustainable Fuel Cycle Task Force Science Panel

April 26, 2010

The Honorable Lee H. Hamilton
Co-Chairman
Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future
U.S. Department of Energy
C/O Mr. Timothy A. Frazier
1000 Independence Ave., SW
Washington, DC 20585-1290

The Honorable Brent Scowcroft
Co-Chairman
Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future
U.S. Department of Energy
C/O Mr. Timothy A. Frazier
1000 Independence Ave., SW
Washington, DC 20585-1290

Re: Letter to BRC Hamilton & Scowcroft

Dear Co-Chairman Hamilton and Co-Chairman Scowcroft:

Congratulations on your appointment as Co-Chairmen to the President's Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future. We recognize the difficult challenges of the task assigned to the Commission, and offer our assistance to you in any way we possibly can. Experience of the members of the Sustainable Fuel Cycle Task Force Science Panel comprises several hundreds of years of collective scientific and managerial effort in addressing the issues of geologic disposal of high level waste. Information about our group is available on our website: www.sustainablefuelcycle.com.

The issues of dealing with the wastes of the nuclear fuel cycle have been examined many times and by many International bodies. Many of our panel members have served on numerous National and International scientific expert panels, which have all concluded that there is no known permanent workable disposal alternative other than geologic disposal. Furthermore, there is an international consensus that disposal is an ethically responsible solution. The United States has existing inventories of high level nuclear wastes and used nuclear fuel that will require eventual geologic disposal. This generation has a societal responsibility to develop a realistic, safe, secure, environmentally protective, and politically workable solution, and not pass responsibilities to future generations. Just leaving used nuclear fuel and highly radioactive wastes in existing and past production locations that were never intended for that purpose, for very long periods of time, is undesirable, especially in these post 911 times.



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The extensive scientific evidence that has been presented to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) in the Yucca Mountain license application indicates that the Yucca Mountain repository is a potentially promising scientific disposal solution. The NRC should be allowed to complete its independent regulatory review to provide their scientific conclusions. Only then, with a sound scientific basis, should the nation make decisions about whether or not a repository at Yucca Mountain is workable, or if another repository site is necessary. Regardless of the continuation of Yucca Mountain or not, this independent NRC information is of significant value.

Alternative disposal solutions should have not only a sound technical basis, but also timely, realistic social and political considerations in the siting approaches so that an alternative disposal site can be technically and socially compared. If the nation concludes that a different geologic disposal site is more workable, than Yucca Mountain, then we recommend prompt implementation of the alternative disposal program, preferable starting with existing defense high level waste, suitably packaged for geologic disposal, such as borosilicate glass logs.

Our membership is available to brief and assist Commission members and staff as desired. Please feel free to contact us via email at sciencepanel@sustainablefuelcycle.com or via telephone at 202-262-6236.

Yours sincerely,

Charles Fairhurst, Ph.D.

D. Warner North Ph.D.

Ruth Weiner, Ph.D.

Isaac Winograd, Ph.D.

Wendell Weart, Ph.D.

Eugene H. Roseboom Jr., Ph.D.

For the
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Copy to Blue Ribbon Commission Members:

- Mark Ayers, President, Building and Construction Trades Department, AFL-CIO
- Vicky Bailey, Former Commissioner, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission; Former IN PUC Commissioner; Former Department of Energy Assistant Secretary for Policy and International Affairs
- Albert Carnesale, Chancellor Emeritus and Professor, UCLA
- Pete V. Domenici, Senior Fellow, Bipartisan Policy Center; former U.S. Senator (R-NM)
- Susan Eisenhower, President, Eisenhower Group, Inc.
- Chuck Hagel, Former U.S. Senator (R-NE)
- Jonathan Lash, President, World Resources Institute
- Allison Macfarlane, Associate Professor of Environmental Science and Policy, George Mason University
- Richard A. Meserve, President, Carnegie Institution for Science, and former Chairman, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
- Ernie Moniz, Professor of Physics and Cecil & Ida Green Distinguished Professor, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
- Per Peterson, Professor and Chair, Department of Nuclear Engineering, University of California - Berkeley
- John Rowe, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Exelon Corporation
- Phil Sharp, President, Resources for the Future